

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 16563 01 OF 02 151050Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 HA-05 /080 W
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O 151043Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4373
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 16563

USSALTTWO

BONN FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PEPR, PARM, SALT, UR, US
SUBJECT: INITIAL PRAVDA COMMENT ON GENEVA TALKS

SUMMARY: IN INITIAL COMMENT ON GENEVA MEETING,
PRAVDA CORRESPONDENT CONVEYS THE IMPRESSION IN JULY 15
PRAVDA THAT VANCE-GROMYKO EXCHANGES ON STRATEGIC
ARMS WERE NOT ONLY SERIOUS BUT ALSO UNAFFECTED BY
THE ATMOSPHERE CREATED BY WESTERN PROTESTS AGAINST
THE SOVIET PERSECUTION OF DISSIDENTS. PRAVDA'S
CORRESPONDENT REPEATS FAMILIAR ARGUMENTATION ABOUT
NEED FOR AMERICAN LEADERS TO "REBUFF"
THE DOMESTIC OPPONENTS OF AN AGREEMENT, AND CALLS ON
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 16563 01 OF 02 151050Z

THEM TO CONVERT THEIR STATEMENTS ABOUT DEVOTION TO
PEACE INTO CONCRETE DEEDS. END SUMMARY.

1. INITIAL SOVIET PRESS COMMENT ON THE GROMYKO-
VANCE MEETING IN GENEVA APPEARS IN A JULY 15 PRAVDA
REPORT BY CORRESPONDENT MEL-NIKOV DATED GENEVA
JULY 11. REPORT TAKES AS STARTING POINT GROMYKO'S

STATEMENT CARRIED IN PRAVDA DAY EARLIER BUT ADDS ADDITIONAL GROMYKO COMMENT NOT PREVIOUSLY REPORTED IN SOVIET PRESS THAT THE USSR STANDS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS AND THIS ASPIRATION FOR AN IMPROVEMENT "SHOULD BE RECIPROCAL."

2. MEL'NIKOV FOLLOWS WITH BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW OF STRATEGIC ARMS TALKS CITING "SIGNIFICANT PRACTICAL MILESTONES" REPRESENTED BY ABM AND SALT TREATIES. THEN CAME THE 1974 VLADIVOSTOK ACCORD WHICH BOTH SIDES, MEL'NIKOV EMPHASIZES, HAD REALISTICALLY EXPECTED TO LEAD WITHIN A YEAR TO A TREATY. HOWEVER, "OBSTRUCTIONS SOON APPEARED" BECAUSE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, MINDFUL OF CIRCLES STANDING FOR A UNCONTROLLED ARMS RACE, TABLED DEMANDS SEEKING A ONE-SIDED ADVANTAGE. MOREOVER THERE WERE ATTEMPTS TO LINK THE FATE OF THE AGREEMENT WITH OTHER POLITICAL PROBLEMS, ATTEMPTS DECISIVELY REJECTED BY THE SOVIETS. TIME WAS REQUIRED BEFORE A MORE REALISTIC, BALANCED LINE COULD BE SEEN IN THE U.S. APPROACH, AND THE NEGOTIATIONS RETURNED TO THE VLADIVOSTOK FRAMEWORK.

3. TURNING TO THE PRESENT, MEL'NIKOV COMMENTS THAT "EVEN TODAY" THERE ARE FORCES IN THE U.S. (NOT FURTHER DESCRIBED) WHICH WISH TO DISRUPT THE NEGOTIATIONS. IF THE ADMINISTRATION REALLY WANTS AN AGREEMENT, IT WILL HAVE TO "REBUFF" THESE FORCES. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 16563 01 OF 02 151050Z

THEN, IN BREZHNEV'S WORDS, "RECIPROCAL EFFORTS BASED ON SENSIBLE AND REALISTIC COMPROMISE..." COULD LEAD TO A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT (APRIL KOMSOMOL SPEECH). MEL'NIKOV CONTINUES THAT THE JUST CONCLUDED TALKS IN GENEVA CONFIRM THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS DOING EVERYTHING NECESSARY FOR THE "FINISHING OFF" (DORABOTKI) OF THE REMAINING OPEN QUESTIONS, AND IS PREPARED TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATING RIGHT AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE AGREEMENT NOW UNDER PREPARATION FOR A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION IN THE LEVEL AND LIMITATION IN THE IMPROVEMENTS OF STRATEGIC ARMS. THE PRAVDA COMMENTATOR CONCLUDES THAT THE WORLD IS AWAITING FROM THE U.S. PRACTICAL STEPS IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT, AND THE CONVERSION OF "STATEMENTS OF THE AMERICAN LEADERS ABOUT THEIR DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE OF PEACE INTO CONCRETE MATTERS."

4. COMMENT: THRUST OF PRAVDA'S INITIAL COMMENT IS THAT ALTHOUGH THE GENEVA TALKS HAVE NOT PRODUCED READILY DESCRIBABLE PROGRESS, THERE CONTINUES TO BE AN OVERALL SERIOUS EFFORT BY BOTH SIDES TO ACHIEVE A STRATEGIC ARMS AGREEMENT. THE ARTICLE AVOIDS ANY SUGGESTION THAT THE ATMOSPHERE AT GENEVA HAS BEEN

AFFECTED BY MATTERS EXTRANEEOUS TO THE ARMS QUESTIONS THEMSELVES. IN FACT MEL'NIKOV TREATS "LINKAGE" AS ALMOST AN HISTORICAL PROBLEM, PLACING IT IN THE CONTEXT OF U.S. POLICY MORE THAN A YEAR AGO WHEN THE ADMINISTRATION TABLED THE INITIAL POST-VLADIVOSTOK PROPOSALS. OF INTEREST ALSO IS MEL'NIKOV'S RESORT TO BREZHNEV'S KOMSOMOL STATEMENT HINTING AT THE NEED FOR MUTUAL FLEXIBILITY.

5. TO REINFORCE AN IMPRESSION OF CONTINUING POSITIVE DIALOGUE BETWEEN SOVIET AND U.S. LEADERS, THE SAME ISSUE OF PRAVDA (WHICH ALSO CARRIES ON ITS BACK PAGE

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 16563 02 OF 02 151052Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 16563

THE UNSIGNED STATEMENT ON SHCHARANSKIY AND FILATOV - SEPTTEL NOTAL), REPORTS THE RECEIPT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER TO BREZHNEV EXPRESSING HIS APPRECIATION ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FOR THE SOVIET LEADER'S JULY 4 GREETINGS. THE COVERAGE GIVEN TO THE PRESIDENTIAL THANK YOU NOTE (IT WAS ALSO CITED ON THE NATIONWIDE TV NEWS SHOW JULY 14) SEEMS CALCULATED BY THE SOVIETS IS TO OFFSET GROWING PUBLIC AWARENESS (FROM WESTERN BROADCASTS) THAT DISSIDENT'S TRIALS HAVE PROVOKED THAT SHARP WORDS, AND SHARP HIGH LEVEL REACTIONS FROM

WESTERN CAPITALS. MATLOCK

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